

JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

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*Published by the Commission on Public Relations
of the National Christian Council of Japan*

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ABLE CODE : JAPACONCIL, ADDRESS : CHRISTIAN CENTER, 2,4-CHOME GINZA, TOKYO, JAPAN

Subscription Rates : Japan ¥700; Foreign (Sea mail) \$2.00; (Air mail) \$3.50.

No. 120

March 15, 1958

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NCC GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Japanese Protestants this month went on record as being in favor of world federal union. Delegates to the National Christian Council's General Assembly, meeting at Fujimicho Church, Tokyo, on March 11-12, passed a resolution urging concerted study and action by the churches in this crucial area of concern. The resolution was introduced by the Reverend Toyohiko Kagawa, the Reverend Michio Kozaki and a number of other churchmen. For several years Dr. Kagawa has been a vigorous promoter of the world federal union movement in this country.

100 delegates, representing roughly two-thirds of the Japanese Protestant community, also

** Endorsed a recommendation submitted by Mrs. Ochimi Kubushiro, national leader of the movement to outlaw prostitution. This resolution made clear that the churches must help to make the new anti-prostitution law a real force in society. (See elsewhere in this issue for a report of concrete steps being taken in this crucial area of Christian concern.)

** Approved entry by the National Christian Council into the newly-organized East Asia Christian Council.

** Launched a new study commission on church unity.

** Embarked on a two-year study program in the field of evangelistic strategy.

This will involve a critical review of work already done in this area. Yen 500,000 (\$1,324) is earmarked for this project.

** Heard a report on the recent observance throughout Japan of the World Day of Prayer. (See elsewhere in this issue.)

** Approved a budget of Yen 45,000,000 (\$125,450) for the coming year's work. \$76,000, or a little more than half of this, will be met by subsidy from abroad. The balance represents contributions by churches, organizations, and individuals here in Japan.

** Heard a challenging sermon by the Reverend Chitose Kishi, Chairman of the Japan Lutheran Church, and president of the Lutheran Theological Seminary.

The Japan National Christian Council, reorganized in May, 1948, has the following purpose: To maintain liaison, fellowship, and cooperation among the various denominations and Christian organizations, and, further, to develop cooperative relations with Christian organizations in other lands, in an effort to realize the one-ness of the Church of Christ throughout the world.

Five denominations and twelve other Christian organizations are Council members: United Church of Christ in Japan, Japan Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Japan, Japan Baptist Convention, and the Association of Korean Churches of Christ in Japan. The Education Association of Christian Schools, Japan Bible Society, Japan YMCA, Japan YWCA, Federation of Christian Nursery Schools, Woman's Christian Temperance Union, Japan Christian Endeavor Union, Christian Culture Association, International Christian Service organization (Church World Service), the "Friends of Jesus" Society, the Christian Medical Society, and the Christian Social Work League.

Associate members include: Tokyo Union Church, German Missionary Association, Conference on Evangelism for the Blind, Association of Baptist Missionaries, Japan Mission of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, and the East Asia German Mission.

REHABILITATION OF EX-PROSTITUTES

Prostitution will be outlawed in Japan after April 1st, and the Christian Church is taking a vital interest in this development. The rehabilitation of the many young girls being discharged from the brothels is a matter of increasing concern. German Deaconesses serving as missionaries of the United Church of Christ and the Reverend Fumio Fukatsu, of the United Church's Kamitomizaka parish in Tokyo, have spearheaded a drive to build a home for ex-prostitutes, which is to house 50 girls. The home will be dedicated April 12.

Ten Japanese Deaconesses, trained by the young women from Germany, and two German Deaconesses, Miss Elizabeth Voehringer and Miss Hanna Rehefeld, will give vocational training and professional guidance to the young ladies from the flesh-pots of the world's largest city.

Supported in part by the Social Welfare Department, the home will include private rooms, recreational facilities, workshops, and a medical dispensary. In an atmosphere of Christian love, the workers hope to guide the girls back to a respectable way of life.

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS CONVENTION

A convention for Sunday Church School teachers from across the nation is to be held at Aoyama Gakuin University, Tokyo, on May 3-4. Sponsored by the United Church of Christ, the meeting is designed to help the Church's 1843 Sunday Schools, including more than 10,000 teachers, in every part of Japan.

Dr. Takeshi Muto, Moderator of the United Church, will be the keynote speaker. Both theological principles and practical problems of curriculum and teaching will be considered. Audio visual methods and materials will be demonstrated.

CONFERENCE ON FILM EVANGELISM

On March 13-14, about sixty Japanese pastors and laymen and eight missionaries gathered at the Christian Audio Visual Center in Tokyo for an intensive conference on film evangelism. Those already using movies and filmstrips in evangelistic work shared their experiences. There was a demonstration of the various uses of the magnastripe technique for adding a soundtrack in Japanese to such American films as John Wesley, King of Kings and Younger Brother.

The delegates were told that the Japanese TV industry has adopted a technique first used by AVACO for putting a lip-synchronized sound track on imported films. Mr. Mathew Ogawa, Executive Secretary of AVACO, reported that broadcasters are now using this technique regularly to adapt such American shows as Dragnet for televising in Japanese. Prior to AVACO's successful experiment commercial producers did not think this method was practical.

SPONSORED BROADCAST WINS WIDE RESPONSE

"Kokoro no Uta" ("Songs of the Heart"), AVACO's first venture into the field of sponsored radio broadcasting, has been receiving good response since the series began last April. Broadcast weekly at 6:30 on Saturday mornings, the program now draws almost a hundred letters a week. During a recent three-month period, more than 250 persons visited Tokyo area churches through letters of introduction sent by AVACO in response to their inquiries.

"Kokoro no Uta", fifteen minutes of hymns with a short message or interpretation in the middle, features the forty-five voice AVACO choir, under the direction of RAVEMCCO scholarship student, Mr. Megumi Hara. In addition to Radio Tokyo, Japan's largest commercial broadcasting station, the program is being aired weekly on sustaining time in Kobe. Response from Kobe has also been encouraging.

Each listener who writes in is sent a small hymnbook and a letter of introduction to the NCC-related church nearest his home. If he writes concerning some personal problem or with a question, his letter gets a personal answer from one of the seven pastors who participate in the Followup Committee.

At present "Kokoro no Uta" reaches about a million listeners in Tokyo alone. The potential listening audience, in and around Tokyo and Kobe, is more than one-fourth of Japan's ninety million souls.

ROSSMAN RETURNS

The Reverend Vern Rossman, Associate Secretary of AVACO, returned to Japan on March 2 with his wife and two children after an extended furlough in the United States.

Mr. Rossman studied for a year at Union Theological Seminary in New York. He also served for six months as ad-interim Executive Secretary of the Radio Audio Visual Education and Mass Communication Commission of the Division of Foreign Missions of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.

CONCORDANCE TO BE PUBLISHED

A Biblical Concordance, based on the Japanese Colloquial Bible, will be ready for publication about the end of 1958. With 1700 pages, this will be the first Concordance of such a size to be produced in Japan. Greek and Hebrew words corresponding to modern Japanese terminology will be listed. A committee of Biblical scholars headed by the Reverend Kaichi Baba, United Church pastor in Chiba, have been at work for three years on this project. The Concordance will be released by Kyobunkwan Publishers, Tokyo. The price has been tentatively set at Yen 4,500 (\$12.55).

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER REPORT

Japan, by virtue of its geographical location, was one of the first countries to observe the World Day of Prayer on February 21. It is expected that the offering from Japan will equal if not exceed the \$1,000 given last year. This year's contribution will be sent to lepers on Okinawa, under the care of the Episcopal Church, and to Red China refugees in Hongkong.

In Tokyo, two services were held at Holy Trinity Church. Speakers were Mrs. Tamaki Uemura, chairman of the Japanese National YWCA, and the Reverend Mrs. Noriko Watanabe, pastor of Shinanomachi Church, both of whom used the program theme, "The Bread of Life."

The program was in both English and Japanese. The audiences were chiefly Japanese, but also included missionaries, other foreigners, and wives of U. S. service personnel. It was significant that the wife of a Negro officer shared in the program.

Other World Day of Prayer services were held at about 300 places across the nation.

WORLD CONVENTION FLASHES

Bishop Otto Dibelius of Germany has accepted an invitation to speak at the World Convention on Christian Education to be held here next summer.

The Japanese Government has offered to grant a three-month visa, free of charge, to each delegate to the Convention who comes from overseas.

